



Howard County
RECREATION & PARKS

Robinson Nature Center
6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044
www.howardcountymd.gov/RobinsonNatureCenter.htm
410-313-0400



Nature Now (Ages 4+) – Teacher Pre-visit Activity

Concepts

This exciting program highlights the special, ever-changing events happening seasonally in nature and on our trails. Explore the fascinating habits of wildlife – whether they are migrating, hibernating or fighting for territory and survival. Take a closer look at the remarkable changes plants undergo – from spreading their seeds, to blooming and attracting pollinators, to dropping their leaves at a method of energy conversation.

Program Activities

Programs are interactive and tailored to the age group of your choice. From preschoolers to adults, come discover the magic behind nature's seasonal transformations! Nature changes as the seasons change. Plants and animals have learned to survive in all seasons and all types of weather. During the outdoor hike, the naturalist will take students through the forest to explore signs of animals' and plants' seasonal activities.

Pre-visit Suggestions

Preparation: Using masking tape, make three large squares on the floor. On the wall, next to each square, post a picture of a face: one with a smile, one with a straight line mouth, and one with a frown. Print out pictures of a rabbit, a kitten, a snake, a spider, a bat, a turtle and a bee.

Ask children to name their favorite animal. Ask children to name an animal they don't like. Why don't you like this animal? Have you ever seen or touched one in real life? Would you like to have one as a pet? Have children stand just outside the squares on the floor. Tell them the name of each face, "Smiley", "Not Sure" and "Frowny". Hold up a picture of a kitten or rabbit. Ask them how they feel about that animal and ask them to go to the square with the face that best describes how they feel about the animal. Repeat this with all the animals. Read some books on these animals, view photos, tell stories that help to show that these animals are beneficial to the environment and to humans. Sometimes first impressions are not correct after all!

Vocabulary

Community: a group of plants and animals living and acting together in the same area

Habitat: a place that provides food, water, and shelter for plants and animals.

Shelter: a place that provides protection from predators, weather, or a place to raise young.

Nature Now (Ages 4+) – Teacher Post-visit Activity

Dear Teacher,

We hope you enjoyed your recent field trip to the Robinson Nature Center. To help with follow-up in the classroom, we have developed the following post-visit materials:

- 1) Follow-up discussion
- 2) Follow-up activities

Follow-up Discussion

- 1) Review the animals that we discussed at Robinson. Have you seen these animals other places? What are these animals doing at this time of year?
- 2) Does nature stay the same all year? No! Nature is always changing!

Follow-up Activity

Habitat Collages – Use magazine pictures to create a large wildlife collage in the classroom. Have each student look for, cut out, and paste animal pictures onto the collage. They should also include food, water and shelter in their collage.

Every animal needs a home! The scientific term for an animal's home is "habitat." An animal's habitat includes food, water, shelter or cover, and space. An animal's shelter might be underground, in a bush, in the bark of a tree, or in some rocks.

Ask the students to draw a floor plan of where they live. A floor plan will include the things the students need in their home – a place to cook and keep food, a place to sleep, and a source of water.

Once the drawings are finished, have them share their drawings. Ask the students how their drawings are similar to animals' homes. Ask students to close their eyes and imagine a bird's home, an ant's home, and a beaver's home. Discuss the similarities and differences among the different homes with students. Have the students identify the components every animal needs in its home – food, water, shelter, and space in which to live – arranged in a way so the animal can survive.

Emphasize that although the home are different, every animal needs a home. Take the students outside to look for animal home.

